

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

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FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5645

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

USMISSION USNATO

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES

USNMR SHAPE

CONFIDENTIAL TRIPOLI 0956

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, LY, MT

SUBJECT: COMMENT ON QADHAFI'S VISIT TO MALTA: TRUE TO FORM

REF: (A) TRIPOLI A-19 (NOTAL), (B) VALLETTA 2034 (NOTAL)

(051247Z JUL 78), (C) VALLETTA 2061 (NOTAL) (071026Z JUL 78)

1. QADHAFI'S LATEST VISIT TO MALTA JULY 1-3 WAS TRUE TO FORM --
LOTS OF CARROT DANGLING BUT PROBABLY LITTLE IN THE WAY OF
ACTUAL COMMITMENTS. THE MAJOR LIBYAN GOAL IN MALTA -- THE
REMOVAL OF THE BRITISH BASES -- WILL BE REALIZED IN 1979.
LIBYA HAS ALWAYS COUPLED THIS "DEMAND" WITH A CALL FOR
MALTESE NEUTRALITY AND ECONOMIC VIABILITY, AND QADHAFI HAS
ONCE AGAIN REITERATED LIBYA'S READINESS TO INCREASE ECONOMIC
ASSISTANCE TO FORWARD THESE AIMS.

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2. HOWEVER, LIBYA RARELY IF EVER GIVES AID WITHOUT
STRINGS, PUBLIC DISCLAIMERS NOTWITHSTANDING. FOR OVER-
LYING QADHAFI'S PERCEPTION OF A SPECIAL MALTESE-LIBYAN
RELATIONSHIP IS HIS PERCEPTION OF MALTA AS A NEIGHBOR
ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE TO FINANCIAL AND, HENCE, POLITICAL
PRESSURE. LIBYA'S LONG-RANGE OBJECTIVES IN MALTA ARE

PROBABLY MORE POLITICAL THAN STRATEGIC, AND FOR THE MOMENT AT LEAST, LIBYA WANTS TO RETAIN THE GREATEST POSSIBLE FINANCIAL LEVERAGE OVER ITS NEIGHBOR IN ORDER TO PRESERVE FOR ITSELF A CONSIDERABLE DEGREE OF INFLUENCE OVER MALTESE FOREIGN (IF NOT DOMESTIC) POLICY. HENCE, LIBYAN ASSISTANCE TO MALTA IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO COME IN TANTALIZING DRIBBLES RATHER THAN IN ONE OR TWO LARGE SERVINGS. IN THIS SENSE, THE ABSENCE OF ANY POSITIVE MOVEMENT ON THE MEDIAN-LINE ISSUE UNDERSCORES LIBYA'S CONDESCENDING ATTITUDE TOWARDS MOST OF HER NEIGHBORS, MALTA INCLUDED, AND DEMONSTRATES ONCE AGAIN LIBYA'S INTEREST IN FORESTALLING ANY POTENTIAL OIL INCOME FOR MALTA WHICH MIGHT GIVE THE REPUBLIC ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE. THIS POLICY HAS, IN ANY EVENT, ENJOYED CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS, AND THE LANGUAGE OF THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE (REF B) PROVIDES A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THE KIND OF PUBLIC SUPPORT LIBYA EXPECTS FROM ITS AID RECIPIENTS. AT THE SAME TIME, WE WOULD CONCUR WITH VALLBWTA'S SUSPICION (REF C) THAT QADHAF MAY HAVE AGREED TO DISCUSS THE RENEWAL OF CONCESSIONAL PRICE ARRANGEMENTS FOR PETROLEUM TO COUNTER WHAT IS, IN ESSENCE, LIBYAN STONEWALLING ON THE MEDIAN LINE ISSUE.

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